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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Legislative Update: Unemployment Figures Continue To Rise***

Washington, D.C. --

In 1992, during the Presidential election a statement became popular and has landed in the history books of modern politics, "It's the economy stupid!" Now find ourselves over a decade later and the general principle has not changed, "It is still the economy stupid!"

The Department of Labor compiles on a monthly basis statistics showing state-by-state the unemployment numbers. The new figures have been released and from January 2001 to March 2003 forty-seven states have seen a rise in the overall unemployment numbers.

During this same period in time, Oklahoma has gone from 48,400 unemployed workers to 85,800 out of work. This is an overall rise of 37,400 workers who now find themselves and their families even more crunched to pay the bills and put food on the table. For a state that barely felt the supposed "economic boom" of the 1990's these skyrocketing unemployment figures have left Oklahoma's economy even more crippled.

Fortunately last week, Congress voted to extend the unemployment benefits to these workers in order to ease the stress and burden felt by families out of work. For every dollar spent on unemployment benefits, \$1.73 is infused back in the local economy. This directly translates into the creation of demand for products, creation of jobs, resources for Americans who need help by putting spending money into their hands for necessities that will help build our economy.

Almost nine million Americans are now unemployed. This is the highest unemployment number in a decade, while the number of jobs available has slipped to a three year low. The deadline was May 31st, and luckily Congress passed an extension to millions of American workers who would have found themselves without any relief and without very few, if any, jobs available.

Economists across the country agree that the best economic stimulus we can propose at this time is to give money to American families that will allow them to pump dollars

into our economy. This is immediate relief, as opposed to some proposals which would take years for the true relief to be felt. A family of four in Oklahoma where the main bread-winner of the household has just been laid off cannot wait years to feel relief. They need a more vibrant, robust economy today.

It is time for Congress to put people before politics. Our economy is in need of urgent help and has no time to wait for partisan politicians to continue by disguising rhetoric as action.

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